

LOCAL



Crossing for hope

SAVANETA — On Sunday November 11th, 2018, five athletes from the Aruba Dolphins Swimming Club will swim from Venezuela to Aruba and all for a good cause called “Crossing for Hope.”

Davie Bisslik, Romar Arendsz, Deaxo Croes, Stephan Thijsen and the only lady among them, Wendy Kock, will be taking the challenge of swimming from Piedra Negras, Falcon State in Venezuela to Savaneta, Aruba. This is a distance of 28.5 kilometers under the guidance of Roly Bisslik who took this challenge back in 1988. This is an ambitious initiative by 5 talented Aruban swimmers all with hearts of gold with the purpose of collecting funds and raise awareness for Koningin Wilhelmina Fonds – a non-profit organization that offers support to cancer patients and works for the prevention of this unfortunate disease.

This event will take place at 7 AM on Sunday November 11th, 2018. It is estimated the swim will take between 9 and 12 hours of swimming with the first swimmer estimated to reach Zeerovers in Savaneta, Aruba at 3 PM. This will continue until all 5 swimmers have arrived safely. This event also brings the community together for such a historical moment in the sports annals of Aruba, and relives the challenge of 1988.

The event in Savaneta will begin at 11 AM until 6 PM. While you wait for the arrival of the athletes, you can enjoy many activities and mingle with locals. A Great ambience, some good food and lots of drinks will be available on the different food trucks. There will be activities for kids of all ages.

Music will be provided by Rincon Boys, Grupo di Betico, Gaita Los Paranderos and Tsunami. You can buy souvenirs such as T-shirt, water bottles, wristbands commemorating this event. It's a day for the whole family to enjoy and at the same time to support a great cause.



Davy Bisslik is the son of the legendary Roly Bisslik. He was only 6 years old when his father swam from Venezuela to Aruba. Since young, Davy had his mind set to someday repeat what his father did back in 1988. Now, 30-years later, he is mentally prepared

and mature enough to fulfill his goal. His wife, Melendy, supports him 100% through this journey. Davy has been swimming since he was 4 years old. Between the ages of 16 to 22, he took part in international competitions and the Olympic Games. He studied at the College of New Jersey (TCNJ) and was a member of the swimming team, where he also qualified for

the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Championships in Atlanta and Missouri. Davy has been training hard to improve his condition for this challenge since June of 2017.



Wendy Kock is the only lady swimmer taking part of this challenge. She is 41 years old, married to Andy Kock and has 2 children. She is a swimming instructor and has been providing swim lessons to schools all over Aruba 2002.

Wendy has a solid goal for this challenge. “As soon as I dive into the water I am going to reach my goal, even if it takes me 8 or 10 hours I will reach”. Wendy has been swimming since she was little. Her first competition was when she was only 8 years old. She has won 6 gold medals in which she set new records. Wendy never stopped swimming. Even now with her 2 grown up children they still love training together. Wendy started intense training for this challenge in February of 2018.



Deaxo Croes is an example for those who think you need to practice a sport since young in order to succeed. He has such motivation and dedication towards this goal. He takes his training very seriously. He is 38 years old. Since

young Deaxo felt a strong connection with the ocean. He started bodyboarding and afterwards started free diving. Swimming was just to compliment his sport. Just 4 years ago he started experimenting in long distance swimming, and more-and-more focused only on swimming since then. Deaxo is determined to reach Aruba with his head up high and say, “I made it”.



Romar Arendsz is an athlete who started swimming since he was little. He is a teacher of movement and health. He is 38 years old and has a long history as an athlete in swimming, cycling and running. Romar has been prepared to

face such challenge. Since little he suffered from asthma and his mother saw swimming as a tool for helping his condition. He took part of his first competition when he was only 6 years old. He has been swimming since then and nowadays he takes part in triathlon competitions. Romar took part to the competition of Iron Man where he finished it in 12 hours. He also ran 75 kilometers all by himself during the annual event “Ronde van Aruba.” He is very strong mentally and feels this is the time and he is ready for this challenge. Romar wants to make people aware that no medical condition should be a burden for you to give up on anything you want. “I just believe in yourself that you can do it and go for it no matter what. The mind is more powerful than the body.”



Stephan Thijsen is 22 years old and is the youngest athlete among the group. Stephan grew up hearing the story of Roly Bisslik and had always had the curiosity and always wanted to do something great like this. Stephan has been swimming for 12 years

now and has won several medals in different categories. He has been training for this challenge since September of 2017. Like the others, he has been eating healthy, preparing himself mentally and physically and is ready and excited to be part of this challenge.

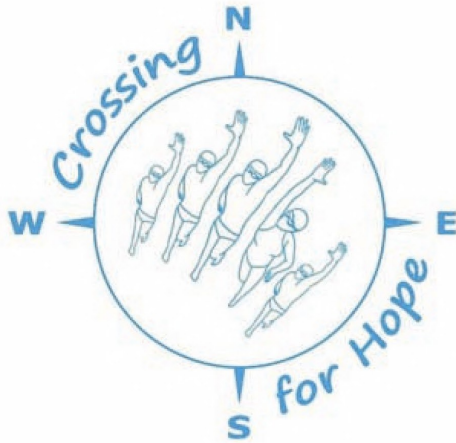


Roly Bisslik- In 1975 Aruba's swimming legend Roly Bisslik started a swimming team with a few friends and family members. Back then, the workouts were done from the shore of the Commandeurs Bay in Savaneta where a few hand painted lines on the rocks

marked the 25, 50 and 100 meters. It was always his dream to build an Olympic Pool in his hometown of Savaneta. His dream became a reality when, on August 7, 1988, he swam for a little bit more than 10 hours a distance of about 28.4 km from the northern shore of Venezuela to Aruba in a very treacherous waters as a fundraising event for his swim team.

Continued on Page 14

Crossing for hope



Continued from Page 13

Up to this day it is the biggest event to ever capture the hearts and souls of all Arubans who donated enough money for the team to buy land right in his backyard. This lot of land was sold to the government of Aruba for the symbolic price of one Aruban florin with the purpose of constructing an Olympic size pool. The pool now proudly bears his name "Pisina Olimpico Roly Bisslik"

All 5 athletes have been preparing physically and mentally for this challenge and are determined to give their utmost to reach their goal. So now it's up to you to join this great cause. How? By supporting them and making a donation to the Koningin Wilhelmina Fonds. Donations can also be made to the bank account CMB 60078005; - Banco di Caribe 80710901; - Aruba Bank 2611450190, don't forget to mention Crossing for Hope. □

